United Nations S/PRST/2000/31

Security Council

Distr.: General
3 November 2000

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4216th meeting of the Security Council, held on 3 November 2000, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Sierra Leone", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the continued fragile situation in Sierra Leone and the related instability in the wider subregion. It condemns the continued cross-border attacks along the border area of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Council stresses that only through a comprehensive regional approach can security and stability be restored. In this regard, it expresses its support for the efforts undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to address the situation, and calls on Member States to provide support.

"In this context, and following the return of its mission to Sierra Leone, the Security Council welcomes the recommendations made in the mission's report (S/2000/992). It in particular expresses its support for the establishment of a continuous, United Nations-based process for overall strategic coordination on Sierra Leone, bringing together Security Council members, the United Nations Secretariat, ECOWAS, troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the Government of Sierra Leone. The Council notes the Secretary-General's support for this proposal in his report of 31 October 2000 (S/2000/1055) and encourages him to take early steps to put such a process into effect.

"The Security Council underlines that such a coordinated strategy for lasting peace in Sierra Leone must combine both political and military elements. The Council fully supports efforts to strengthen the State institutions of Sierra Leone and to maintain the principles of democratic accountability and the rule of law. It also places emphasis on the humanitarian and human rights aspects. It welcomes the current efforts of ECOWAS to explore the possibilities of dialogue towards peace, but stresses that this should only be pursued under terms acceptable to the Government of Sierra Leone. In this context, the Council underlines the importance of the Revolutionary United Front relinquishing control of the diamond-producing areas, full freedom of movement for UNAMSIL leading to its deployment throughout the country, proper provision for the disarmament and demobilization of all non-governmental forces, full and secure humanitarian access and the extension of

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the authority of the Government throughout its territory. The Council also calls upon those armed groups responsible for continuing human rights abuses to put an immediate end to such activities.

"The Security Council is convinced that the continuation of a credible military presence of the international community in Sierra Leone remains an indispensable element of the peace process. The Council concurs with the Secretary-General's view that a key aspect of the overall approach on Sierra Leone is the continued provision of security by UNAMSIL in key areas of the country. The Council reiterates its view that to achieve this UNAMSIL requires strengthening. The Council also underlines the importance of continued action to improve the effectiveness of UNAMSIL through the full implementation of the recommendations of the May assessment mission. The Council notes the decisions by the Governments of India and Jordan to end their troops' participation in UNAMSIL, and expresses its appreciation for the important contribution made by these two contingents. It also warmly welcomes the new commitments made by Bangladesh and Ghana of additional battalions, by Ukraine of equipment and support personnel and by Slovakia of equipment to enhance the force's capability. The Council urges both departing and incoming contingents to display all possible flexibility to ensure that force capability is maintained as UNAMSIL moves into this period of transition.

"The Security Council supports the appeal by the Secretary-General to Member States, as set out in paragraph 55 of his report, urgently to consider participating in UNAMSIL or otherwise contributing to its reinforcement, and encourages him to intensify his consultations to this end. The Council reiterates its firm intention to take action to strengthen UNAMSIL at the appropriate time, taking into account the readiness of troop-contributing countries to provide sufficient forces to this end."